CLAIMS

1.   A method of providing a jackpot in a gaming machine, said machine having multiple simulated reels, and at least one payline, including at least the steps of:

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        (a)   determining a player's wager;

        (b)   playing the game, so that the simulated reels assume a specific configuration;

        (c)   determining if scatter symbols appear across said reels in a predefined manner, and if so then paying said jackpot.

10   2.   A method according to claim 1, wherein in step (b) one or more variable scatter symbols on at least one reel may appear in an active or inactive state, wherein the probability of said scatter symbol appearing in an active state is dependant upon the size of the player's wager.

3.   A method according to claim 2, wherein the probability of winning a
15 jackpot based upon the scatter symbols is linearly dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to a maximum possible wager.

4.   A method according to claim 3, wherein the inactive symbol is operative for non-jackpot game play.

5.   A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the
20 scatter symbols on some reels are always active, and on one or more reels some or all of the scatter symbols are only selectively active dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to the maximum possible wager.

6.   A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the jackpot is accumulated across a plurality of linked machines.

25   7.   A method according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the jackpot is accumulated on a single machine.

8.   A system for operating a linked jackpot, comprising at least a plurality of gaming machines linked to a central jackpot controller, said central jackpot controller and said machines cooperating to implement the method
30 according to any one of claim 1 to 6.

9.   A method of awarding a jackpot in a simulated reels gaming machine, wherein dependant upon the configuration of reels after game play, one or more reels may include active scatter symbols, and one reel may include a set

of symbols which selectively form active or inactive scatter symbols, the jackpot being won by a predetermined combination of active scatter symbols in a game outcome display including one on the said one reel, wherein the probability that a scatter symbol is active on the game outcome display is dependant upon the size of the player's wager, and a maximum possible wager for the machine.

10. A gaming machine having multiple simulated reels, said machine including a processor, player wager selection means and a display, and at least one payline, the processor playing a game in accordance with software, the game including the steps of:

(a) receiving a player's wager from the wager selection means;

(b) playing the game, so that the simulated reels are shown in a specific configuration on said display;

(c) determining if scatter symbols appear across said reels in a predefined manner, and if so then paying said jackpot.

11. A gaming machine according to claim 10, wherein one or more scatter symbols on at least one reel may appear in an active or inactive state, wherein the probability of the scatter symbols appearing in an active state is dependant upon the size of the player's wager, and the jackpot is paid only if active scatter symbols appear across said reels in a predefined manner.

12. A gaming machine according to claim 11, wherein the probability of winning a jackpot based upon the active scatter symbols is linearly dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to a maximum possible wager.

13. A gaming machine according to claim 11 or claim 12, wherein the inactive symbol is operative for non-jackpot game play.

14. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 10 to 13, wherein the scatter symbols on some reels are always active, and on one or more reels some or all of the scatter symbols are only selectively active dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to the maximum possible wager.

15. A system for operating a linked jackpot game, comprising at least a plurality of gaming machines according to any one of claims 10 to 14, said gaming machines being linked to a central jackpot controller, said central jackpot controller and said machines cooperating to provide a pooled jackpot incremented from wagers on all of said gaming machines.

16. A gaming machine having multiple simulated reels, said machine including a processor, player wager selection means and a display, and at least one payline, the processor playing a game in accordance with software, wherein dependant upon the configuration of reels after game play, one or more reels may include active scatter symbols, and one reel may include a set of symbols which selectively form active or inactive scatter symbols, the jackpot being won by a predetermined combination of active scatter symbols in a game outcome display including one on the said one reel, wherein the probability that a scatter symbol is active on the game outcome display is dependant upon the size of the player's wager, and a maximum possible wager for the machine.

17. A computer software product, adapted to implement the method of any one of claims 1 to 9.